THE REMONSTRANCE.

BOSTON, JANUARY, 1908.

The Remonstrance is published annually by the Massachusetts Association Opposed to the Further Extension of Suffrage to Women. It expresses the views of Women in Massachusetts, Maine, Rhode Island, New York, Illinois, Iowa, Oregon, Washington, and other states who believe that the great majority of their sex do not want the ballot, and that to force it upon them would not only be an injustice to women, but would lessen their influence for good and imperil the community. The Remonstrants ask a thoughtful consideration of their views in the interest of fair discussion.

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REASONS AGAINST WOMAN SUFFRAGE.

The Grounds on which Women who do not Want the Ballot Base their Opposition.

We desire briefly to present some of the reasons on which women who do not want the ballot base their opposition to it. We represent the 12,000 women of voting age who constitute the Massachusetts Association Opposed to the Further Extension of Suffrage to Women, and we express the views of similar associations and committees in New York, Illinois, Oregon, Maine, Iowa, Rhode Island, Washington, and other states.

Four assumptions underlie the arguments urged for woman suffrage. First, that the women who ask for the ballot speak for their sex; second, that the improvement in the position of women under the laws and in education and industry is coincident with the suffrage movement and attributable to it; third, that the suffrage movement is a movement of progress; fourth, that to give the ballot to women would improve their condition and enlarge their influence. All of these assumptions we deny.

As to the first, evidence in disproof is found in the small proportion of women who exercise school suffrage in states where the right has been given them, and still more strikingly in the fact that, on the only occasion on which the sentiment of women has been fully and impartially tested,— at the Massachusetts referendum of 1895, when all women of voting age were permitted to vote Yes or No upon the question whether it was expedient that municipal suffrage be granted to women,— less than 4 per cent of the women qualified to vote voted Yes.

As to the second, changes in the laws,— making them more favorable to women in regard to property, the rights of married women, etc.,— antedate the woman suffrage movement, have no connection whatever with it, and are most marked in states where women do not have the ballot. The activities of suffragists have not been directed to the founding or the endowment of colleges for women. The enlarged industrial opportunities of women and the entrance of women into professions and occupations formerly closed to them are due in part to economic changes and in part to improved facilities for education.

As to the third assumption, we hold that the suffrage movement is not one of progress but one of retro-

gression. In biology, the higher the scale of being, the more sharply defined are differences of function. In the history of civilization, the farther we get from savagery, the greater is the consideration shown to women and the more nearly universal the disposition among men to relieve them of the harder work and to shield them from the rougher experiences of life. The suffrage movement, so far from being a movement of progress, confuses the functions of men and women, proposes to put upon women heavy burdens of responsibility in addition to those which they already bear and of which they cannot be relieved, and urges them to give up the privileges and exemptions which the increasing consideration of men has conceded them, and to enter upon an unequal struggle in the arena of politics and legislation

As to the fourth assumption, we hold that to give women the ballot not only would not improve the condition of women, but would restrict and diminish their influence. Most of the principal injustices of the law toward women have already been remedied by means of existing constitutional machinery, and with regard to those which remain, we see no unwillingness to deal with them in the legislatures, and we would rather trust to the courtesy and justice of men than seek to wrest advantages through the use of the ballot. As to the influence which women exert upon public affairs, upon reforms, and upon legislation, we believe that it is greater for being indirect and disinterested.

We desire the fullest possible development of the powers, energies, and opportunities of women, but we believe that their work for the state and their responsibilities toward it must always differ essentially from those of men, and that, therefore, their share of the working of the state machinery should be different from that assigned to men. We are in full sympathy with the efforts which have been made to give women a more important part in those affairs of the community where their interests and those of men are equally concerned. We rejoice in the work of women in the care of the sick and insane, in the treatment of the poor, in the education of children and in the administration of charities, libraries, and various agencies of reform. We would give to women their full share in the state of social effort and social mechanism; we look for their increasing activity in that higher state which rests on thought, conscience, and moral influence; but we protest against their admission to direct power in that state which rests and must rest upon force — the state in its administrative, military, and financial aspects, where the physical capacity, the accumulated experience, and inherited training of men ought to prevail without the harassing interference of those who, though they may be partners with men in debate, can in these matters never be partners with them in action.

For the Executive Committee,
Mrs. G. H. SHAW, *President*,
Massachusetts Association Opposed to the Further Extension of Suffrage to Women.

THE BEST TEST.

THE best test to apply to settle the disputed question whether women do or do not want the ballot is the use which they have made of such forms of the suffrage as have been granted them.

In Massachusetts the test is the use which women have made of school suffrage. The official figures are easily accessible to any one who will take the pains to study them. For convenience of comparison, the following may be cited:

	Women Registered.	Women Voted.
1904.		
Boston,	17,119	8,919
Cities outside of Boston,	16,638	4,872
Towns,	14,637	4,112
	48,394	17,903
1905.		
Boston,	15,655	9,319
Cities outside of Boston,	15,936	4,902
Towns,	15,215	3,428
	46,806	17,649
1906.		
Boston,	14,628	8,595
Cities outside of Boston,	16,991	5,632
Towns,	16,047	4,256
	47,666	18,483

From the foregoing figures it appears that, out of perhaps 600,000 women in Massachusetts of voting age, the largest number who registered in either of these years was 48,394, in 1904; and that, of this number, only 17,903 — or slightly less than three eighths — voted. In 1906, in almost exactly one half of the towns, —158 out of 321, — not a single woman cast a vote for School Committee.

So long as only 4 per cent of Massachusetts women vote at school elections, the legislature is well advised in regarding the wishes of the 96 per cent who do not want the ballot.

PRESIDENTIAL SUFFRAGE BILLS.

In four legislatures last year bills were introduced proposing to confer upon women the right to vote for presidential electors. All of them were rejected, but in one or two instances they received the sanction of one branch.

It so often happens that one branch of a legislature passes a woman suffrage bill with the comfortable assurance that it will be rejected by the other, that it is not altogether clear whether the limited approval given to these bills in the states to which reference is made, is or is not to be taken seriously. But it will occur to most thoughtful people that the question is too important to be made the subject of jest.

In the case of suffrage measures which take this particular form, the prime question is not whether women might or might not vote intelligently for President. The prime question is whether any legislature has the moral right — waiving for the moment the question whether it has a constitutional right — to make so revolutionary a change as this in the electoral system without allowing the electors of the state to express their opinion upon it.

Each state constitution provides an orderly method for its own amendment. Usually, the action of two legislatures is required, followed by ratification at the polls. But a presidential suffrage bill proposes that a single legislature, without any mandate from the electors, and without submitting the question to them at any stage, shall double the electorate, so far as the highest form of suffrage is concerned, and with it double the cost of registration and largely increase the cost of elections.

Moreover, the suffragists make no concealment of the fact that their reason for asking the legislatures to adopt this revolutionary proceeding

is their desire to escape the risk attending the prescribed method of amending state constitutions. They do not dare to take their proposals before the electors, because in every instance during the past ten years in which woman suffrage amendments have been submitted to a vote, they have been rejected at the polls; but they ask the legislatures to help them to circumvent the electors by getting presidential suffrage enacted by the act of a single legislature. This motive was practically avowed by the *Woman's Journal* of July 13, 1907.

The legislatures to which this proposal may be made this year can have no excuse if they fail to grasp its real meaning.

A LIGHT VIEW OF THE BALLOT.

To the objection that women are already over-burdened with responsibilities which they cannot evade, and that they have no time for an intelligent exercise of the suffrage, the reply of the suffragists usually is that the casting of a ballot is a simple matter, which takes at the most but a few minutes, and that any woman ought to be willing to spare the little time which is required.

Perhaps, if the casting of a ballot were the whole of it. But, if women are to vote intelligently they must know what the ballot which they cast stands for. They must acquaint themselves with public men and public measures. They must study the issues involved in local, state, and national politics. They must know something of the character and record of the candidates presented, whether they are honest, intelligent, trustworthy. And, unless they are to leave all the important preliminaries to the other sex, they must attend caucuses, serve upon political committees, and act as delegates to nominating conventions.

All these activities, to be sure, are aside from their natural duties and in addition to them, but, unless they are merely to swell the already too large mass of ignorant voters, women must undertake all these responsibilities with whatever cheerfulness they may muster.

This is by no means the light and trivial thing which the suffragists represent it to be.

NATURE'S STERN BARRIERS.

By Miss Katherine E. Conway.

In opposing the further extension of the suffrage to women, the writer has no uncertain conviction of feminine ability to grasp and oftentimes cogently to express a political situation. The excellent work of some women as editorial writers on political topics, the beneficent influence of many women quietly exercised in times of public stress and strain, albeit they have no desire for the suffrage as a personal possession, are against sweeping depreciations of feminine intelligence in this matter.

If the exercise of unrestricted suffrage on the part of women involved no more — to quote a favorite illustration from many of its advocates — than the putting of a letter in the mail box, it would be hard to press a case against it, especially in view of the high mentality and patriotism of some women suffragists well known in these parts.

But the extension of unrestricted suffrage would logically involve the extension of eligibility for political office to women. As one who has had from earliest years more than ordinary opportunity to study the effects of political campaigning and competition for elective office among men, and in recent years among women for such offices as are open to us under our restricted suffrage, the writer should for women's and for humanity's sake protest against any enlargement of our opportunities to vote.

The question of divinely appointed function, and consequently of difference in physique, lies at the root of the matter. We have not and we never can have the physical strength of men as expressed in muscle and bone. Then our mental outlook is different. Our partisanship is more intense and exhausting. It is well nigh impossible for the most of us to exclude our personal feelings from the consideration of impersonal matters. Our emotions rend our hearts. Our over-sensitive consciences would often persuade us that a sudden change in a political program involved more or less of moral obliquity on the part of those making it; whereas there might be no question of right and wrong, but only of entirely justifiable opportuneness or expediency.

What woman can safely add to her ordinary domestic duties, or the work by which she lives, if she is a wage-earner, the fatigues of a fortnight of speechmaking whether as candidate or candidate's supporter, with the swift alternating strains of hope and fear, the quick resentment of inevitable personal attack from the opposition, and all the rest, which wear severely even on the comparatively insensitive fiber of men?

Let us not delude ourselves here. We cannot eat our cake and keep it. The moment we descend into the ranks of seekers for elective office — and thither we should go the day after our attainment of unrestricted suffrage — we should lose the chivalrous consideration which men in general give to women as women. For we should be contending against men, and the commoner masculine element, which will always be the majority, would see us not only as rivals, but as rivals who had no business on the ground.

Our opportunity to put conscience into politics is in whatever personal influence we can exercise on actual and potential voters. Direct participation in the strenuous business will not improve politics, but will of a certainty injure women. — *From the Boston Sunday Globe, February 17, 1907.*

[Miss Conway is widely known as a journalist and author. She is a frequent contributor to the magazines and literary journals; she has published twelve books, in prose and verse; and she has been for fifteen years associate editor and for two years managing editor of the Boston *Pilot*. She was recently the recipient of the Laetare Medal, awarded for literary achievement. She rendered valuable service ten or twelve years ago upon the Massachusetts Prison Commission.]

SUFFRAGE DEFEATS ABROAD.

The Assembly of Cape Colony, July 4, rejected a resolution in favor of woman suffrage by 66 votes to 24.

The Legislative Council of New Zealand, August 20, rejected by a unanimous vote a bill providing for the election of an upper house by the House of Representatives, according to one of the clauses of which women electors were to be eligible to election to the upper house.

STILL DIMINISHING.

"Continued falling off in the registration of women voters. Interest in the cause of the enfranchisement of the sex is still confined to the small minority." — *Boston Herald, editorial, November 23, 1907.*

BY NO MEANS THE SAME THING.

AMERICAN suffragists are in the habit of referring to the right to vote at municipal elections exercised by Englishwomen as if it were substantially the same thing that is sought for women in municipal suffrage bills which American legislatures are asked to enact.

The truth is that it is something very different. For one thing, no married woman votes at English municipal elections. The ballot is given only to unmarried women and to widows, and then only under certain restrictions as to property and residence. *Harper's Weekly* of October 12, 1907, in an article describing the recently-enacted law under which English women are permitted to become members of municipal councils, remarks:

The new act has one serious shortcoming, from the woman's point of view, at least. No woman can be a candidate for election **unless she is on the register of voters, which means that she must be either unmarried or a widow, as well as a householder, or the sole occupant of a room as lodger. No married woman has a vote,** and therefore no married woman can be a candidate, a state of affairs very far from satisfactory to the Women's Local Government Society. It has been decided, therefore, that a bill be introduced into Parliament next year to remove the disqualification of marriage and other electoral disabilities of women in local government, though it cannot be said that the prospects of such a bill becoming law are particularly bright.

AGAIN THE "SUFFRAGETTES."

TURBULENT demonstrations at political meetings and disorderly interruptions of the regular processes of justice in the police courts are the latest devices of the English "Suffragettes" for making plain the fitness of women for a wise use of the ballot. The following from the Boston *Transcript* of November 23, 1907, describes these proceedings as follows:

The "Suffragettes" last night virtually compelled Herbert Gladstone, Secretary of State for Home Affairs, to abandon his attempt to address a meeting at Leeds. The interruption from the "Suffragettes" became so persistent that Mr. Gladstone declared he would no longer struggle against such tactics, and brought his speech to a sudden close. One of the Suffragettes thereupon tried to take possession of the meeting. While she was speaking a free fight broke out between the women and men of the audience. Mr. Gladstone and his wife beat a speedy retreat and the chairman declared the meeting closed.

The "Suffragettes" shifted their campaign to the courts to-day, and scenes resembling those at recent political meetings resulted. Well-dressed women appeared at the Guild hall and other police courts, and when the first women offenders were brought into the dock at each court a woman in each case arose, protested against "man-made laws," and declared that the women could not be tried until they had a voice in making the laws. The police removed the disturbers as gently as possible.

RECENT DEFEATS OF WOMAN SUFFRAGE.

IN 1905.

In California, Indiana, Massachusetts, Missouri, Montana and **West Virginia** resolutions providing for the submission of suffrage amendments to the constitution were defeated. In **Connecticut, Illinois, Maine, New Hampshire** and **Wisconsin** municipal suffrage bills were defeated. The legislatures of **Kansas** and **Rhode Island** rejected presidential suffrage bills. In **Massachusetts** "leave to withdraw" was voted upon a license suffrage bill. In **New York,** a bill giving the ballot on questions of appropriations to tax-paying women in cities of the third class was defeated. In Wheeling, **West Virginia,** a municipal suffrage proposition was rejected at the polls by a vote of 2,500 against 4,172.

IN 1906.

In Iowa, February 13, the House, by a vote of 37 to 50, rejected a resolution providing for the submission of a suffrage amendment to the constitution. Later, a presidential suffrage bill was passed by the House but failed in the Senate.

In Massachusetts, the legislative committees reported unanimously against a license suffrage bill, a bill for municipal suffrage for wage-earning women, and a bill to admit women to caucuses of political parties for the nomination of school committee; and 9 to 2 against a resolve for an amendment to the constitution. All of these adverse reports were accepted by both houses.

In New York, a bill to allow tax-paying women in cities of the third class to vote upon propositions involving an expenditure of money was again lost.

In Ohio, the House, February 13, by a vote of 65 to 50, defeated a bill permitting women to vote at local option elections; and February 14, by a vote of 62 to 51, rejected a bill allowing women to vote on equal terms with men on all questions affecting the schools.

In Oregon, June 4, a proposed constitutional amendment, conferring full suffrage upon women, which was submitted to the people at the polls under the initiative referendum, was defeated by a majority of 10,173. The affirmative vote was 36,902; the negative vote, 47,075. In 1900, when a similar proposition was voted on, the majority against it was only 1,966.

In Rhode Island, a presidential suffrage bill passed the House but was defeated in the Senate.

In Vermont, the House passed a municipal suffrage bill, 130 to 25, but the Senate rejected it, 17 to 12.

IN 1907.

In California, a resolution providing for the submission of a suffrage amendment to the constitution which had passed the Assembly by exactly the required two-thirds vote, failed in the Senate, March 1, having received only 17 affirmative votes, when 27 were required. Twelve votes were cast against it, and 11 senators did not vote. March 5, a motion to reconsider failed, receiving but 25 votes. Thirteen Senators voted against it, and 2 did not vote.

In Connecticut, June 11, the House rejected a presidential suffrage bill, 55 to 93, and a municipal suffrage bill, 56 to 86. The Senate chose to regard both bills as a jest, and only one senator voted upon them. His vote was in the affirmative.

In Illinois, the Chicago charter convention, February 16, rejected a resolution recommending the legislature to give to women the municipal ballot. In the legislature a proposed constitutional amendment, a general suffrage bill, and a bill giving municipal suffrage to the women of Chicago, were all defeated.

In Indiana, a presidential suffrage bill and a municipal suffrage bill were introduced. Both failed.

In Iowa, a resolution providing for the submission of a suffrage amendment to the constitution was rejected by the Senate, March 22, by a vote of 21 to 26.

In Maine, a resolution for a suffrage amendment to the constitution was rejected by both House and Senate by a unanimous vote.

In Massachusetts, the legislative committee on constitutional amendments voted, 8 to 3, against a resolution for a suffrage amendment to the constitution. In the House, a motion to substitute the amendment resolve for the adverse report received only 14 votes to 125 in the negative, and the report of the committee was then accepted *vive voce*. The Senate accepted the adverse report without a division. The committee on election laws reported unanimously against a license suffrage bill, and both houses accepted the report by unanimous vote.

In Minnesota, a resolve for a suffrage amendment to the constitution was indefinitely postponed by the House, February 26, by a vote of 65 to 35, and was defeated in the Senate, April 12, by a vote of 21 yeas to 33 nays.

In Nebraska, a bill memorializing Congress to submit to the state legislatures an equal suffrage amendment to the federal constitution passed the Senate, 17 to 16, but was rejected by the House.

In New Hampshire, a municipal suffrage bill was defeated.

In New York, the Assembly, March 27, rejected, by a vote of 70 to 38, a bill to give tax-paying women in cities of the third class the right to vote on questions of appropriations. A resolution proposing the submission of a suffrage amendment to the constitution was introduced, but the Senate committee on the judiciary voted not to report it.

In Oklahoma, the constitutional convention, February 5, by a vote of 54 to 37, tabled a motion to strike out the word "male" from the proposed qualifications of voters; and February 6, by a vote of 50 to 37, refused to order the question of woman suffrage to be submitted to the electors of the state.

In Oregon, a resolution to submit to the voters of the state in 1908 a woman suffrage amendment without preliminary signatures to an initiative petition passed the House, 31 to 21, but was rejected by the Senate, by a vote of 19 to 8.

In Rhode Island, the Senate, February 19, passed a presidential suffrage bill, but the House committee on special legislation voted not to report the measure, and the bill was dropped.

In Texas, a resolution providing for the submission of a suffrage amendment to the constitution was adversely reported and did not reach a vote in the legislature.

In West Virginia, a proposed constitutional amendment was defeated in the legislature.

In Wisconsin, a proposal to submit to the voters a suffrage amendment to the constitution was indefinitely postponed by the House, May 7, by a vote of 53 to 35. In the Senate the vote was at first a tie, but the bill was killed June 19, and a motion to reconsider was rejected June 20, by a decisive vote.